

**JOSEPH W. MURRAY, ESQ.**

185 Great Neck Road, Suite 461  
Great Neck, New York 11021

T: (646) 838-1702

F: (646) 514-4771

C: (718) 514-3855

E: Joe@Jmurray-law.com



**ADMITTED TO PRACTICE**

New York State  
Eastern District of New York  
Southern District of New York

JMURRAY-LAW.COM

May 31, 2023

Via Email: [Sydney.bellwoar@mail.house.gov](mailto:Sydney.bellwoar@mail.house.gov)

118<sup>th</sup> Congress  
United States House of Representatives  
Committee on Ethics  
105 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515-6328  
Attn: House Counsel, Ms. Sydney Bellwoar

Re: Ethics Committee's request to review unsecured bond sureties

Dear Ms. Bellwoar,

I am the personal attorney for Congressman George Santos and I am also the Congressman's attorney of record in the criminal matter pending against my client in the Eastern District of New York known as *U.S. v George Santos*, Case No. 23-CR-197(JS)(AYS). I write in response to a letter from the Ethics Committee, dated May 16, 2023, signed by both Chairman, Michael Guest and Ranking Member, Susan Wild. For the following reasons I respectfully request to extend our deadline to respond to the Honorable Ethics Committee for thirty (30) days, until June 30, 2023.

As I am sure that you are aware, the suretors in the case have been kept confidential and the surety records and proceedings remain under seal by the Court. However, there have since been two motions filed essentially seeking to unseal the identity of the sureties and the surety records and proceedings. See letter request from The New York Times Company, dated May 23, 2023, document-13, and letter request filed on behalf of various news organizations including ABC News, et al., dated May 25, 2023, document-14, annexed hereto. On May 30, 2023, United States Magistrate Judge Anne Y. Shields, provided a Scheduling Order directing the Government and Defendant to respond to the pending motions to unseal by June 2, 2023. Judge Shields did not allow these non-parties the opportunity to Reply to our responses, nor did the Court schedule any oral argument. Therefore, we do expect a decision on this matter in short order within the next thirty (30) days.

That withstanding, and in the abundance of caution, and in keeping with Congressman Santos' full cooperation, I respectfully submit to you that upon my review of the Rules of the House of Representatives of the One-Hundred Eighteenth Congress, I firmly believe that

Congressman Santos has conducted himself honorably, lawfully, and ethically in keeping with the good order and finest traditions of an honorable member of the United States House of Representatives, in the manner in which the suretors who cosigned the unsecured \$500,000.00 appearance bond, under oath in court were engaged.

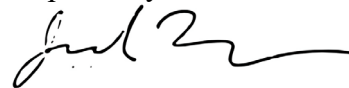
Although I am unable to reveal the identity of the suretors, due to the Court sealing the proceedings, I direct your attention to Rules of the House of Representatives, 118th Cong., Rule XXV, cl. 5(a)(2)(A) (2023), which defines “gift” as “a gratuity, favor, discount, entertainment, hospitality, loan, forbearance, or other item having monetary value. The term includes gifts of services, training, transportation, lodging, and meals, whether provided in kind, by purchase of a ticket, payment in advance, or reimbursement after the expense has been incurred.” Under this definition the surety co-signor of an unsecured appearance bond may be considered a “favor” or “other item having monetary value.” *Id.*

Turning to Rule XXV, cl. 5(a)(3)(C)(2023) which provides that “[t]he restrictions in subparagraph (1) do not apply to the following: [...] “[a] gift from a relative as described in section 109(16) of title I of the Ethics in Government Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App. 109(16)).” *Id.* Finally, the term “relative” is defined in section 109(16) of title I of the Ethics in Government Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App. 109(16)) as “relative” means an individual who is related to the reporting individual, as father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, great aunt, great uncle, first cousin, nephew, niece, husband, wife, grandfather, grandmother, grandson, granddaughter, father-in-law, mother-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, stepfather, stepmother, stepson, stepdaughter, stepbrother, stepsister, half brother, half sister, or who is the grandfather or grandmother of the spouse of the reporting individual, and shall be deemed to include the fiance or fiancée of the reporting individual.” *Id.*

Please understand that unless or until such time that the Court unseals the identities of the suretors, the surety records, and proceedings, I cannot share that information with this Honorable House Ethics Committee. However, these are the relevant provisions of the exceptions to the gift rule. Accordingly, I am respectfully requesting a thirty-day extension of this deadline to Friday, June 30, 2023. If the Court decides to unseal the identities of the sureties, the surety records and proceedings, I will share that information with the Committee. If, however, the Court upholds the sealing, I will also share that Order with this Committee.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have.

Respectfully,



Joseph W. Murray, Esq.

Attachments:

- Letter request from The New York Times Company, dated May 23, 2023, document-13
- Letter request filed on behalf of various news organizations including ABC News, et al., dated May 25, 2023, document-14
- May 30, 2023, Scheduling Order of United States Magistrate Judge Anne Y. Shields